BENGALURU, MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026 www.Bangaloremirror.com 12 Pages PRICE ₹3

Bangalore Mirror

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TECH WIZ

Brain behind AI-enabled helmet that can catch traffic violations tells us it was frustration that drove him to design device

PAGE 2

OPEN THE GATE

Citizens rally against South City Corporation's move restricting entry to parks to just a few hours in the mornings, evenings

PAGE 4

As sex workers scout for customers at Majestic bus station, BMTC staff file police complaint and bus passengers complain of various distasteful interactions

SLEAZE AT THE STOP

Some tell-tale signs: Used condoms in public toilet, all benches occupied

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Kempe Gowda Bus Station aka Majestic Bus Station, a vital transport hub in the city, is in the throes of sex trade with transgenders, sex workers, and miscreants roaming its alleys scouting for customers. The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) authorities have been taking a lot of measures to end this menace, but nothing has worked so far. Used condoms that litter the area behind the public toilet on the western side of the bus station are a clear sign that the public space is turning into a brothel while authorities, including the Upparpet Police, fail to take effective action. Public toilets are supposed to have condom vending machines, but they are certainly not supposed to be dumping spots for used condoms.

Around five lakh people visit the Kempe Gowda Bus Station on a daily basis from various places or to go to their destinations in and around the city. The presence of sex workers is not only awkward but also unsafe for women. "One of the miscreants mistook a software employee as a sex worker and misbehaved with her because she was wearing a mask as most of the sex workers wear masks," said a BTMC employee.

While the foot overbridge is

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PIC FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

"No woman opts to become a sex worker voluntarily. Reasons to opt for sex work vary from one sex worker to the other. The sex workers should solicit customers without causing inconvenience to the BMTC commuters

— Geetha M, Sadhana Mahila Sanghatane

Sex workers protest against their removal from the bus stop on December 16

Sullied at source

As Cauvery continues to get trashed at upstream villages, Bengaluru can't avoid toxic fallout

File photo of Cauvery water pumping station in TK Halli

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Bengaluru, a high altitude city that depends almost entirely on the Cauvery for its drinking water, is staring at an uncomfortable truth. The river that quenches the thirst of over a crore people is being polluted at its very source. Despite repeated warnings from environmental groups and local residents in Kodagu, untreated sewage, household waste and garbage continue to flow into the Cauvery, raising fears that the city's lifeline is slowly turning toxic.

The Cauvery originates at Talacauvery and flows through Bhagamandala, Murnadu, Guddehosuru and Kushalnagar before reaching Bengaluru and later neighbouring states. Ironically, pollution is at its worst in these upstream villages. Household sewage, including toilet waste, is being let directly into the river, while plastic, food waste and other garbage are dumped along the banks. In areas like Karadigodu and Kondangeri, workers living close to the river have been spotted releasing waste straight into the watercourse.

Residents allege that homes, hotels, marriage halls and other establishments along the river stretch discharge waste daily with little fear of action. Gram panchayats along the river have failed to enforce basic

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Tune in

Piyush Mishra will be performing live as part of the Aarambh 2.0 India Tour, redefining live performance by blending music, poetry, and theatre into an unforgettable experience. **Where: Phoenix Marketcity, Whitefield; When: January 17, 7 pm**

02 Beyond imagination

Ranga Shankara returns with its signature intimate storytelling programme, Little Cloud, packed with an enchanting experience of creativity, laughter and imagination. The sessions are held for children aged 4 to 6 every Saturday and Sunday. **Where: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: January 3 to March 15, 10 am**

03 Pet project

Pet Fed is back with two days of pure joy for pets and pet lovers alike, bringing paw-sitivity, fun, and unforgettable experiences. **Where: KTPO, Whitefield; When: Jan 17, 11 am**

04 Groove on

Known for his soulful vocals and heartfelt compositions, Gajendra Verma will be performing live, bringing a night of music, emotions, and memories. **Where: Orion Mall, Rajajinagar; When: February 7, 6 pm**

05 Immersive experience

The Sixth Sense, India's first and largest multidisciplinary immersive festival, conceptualised and developed by Swordfish, the creators of Echoes of Earth festival, brings together art, music, technology, and nature to rekindle connection with the natural world. **Where: Alembic City, Whitefield; When: February 5 to 22**

Frustrated with B'luru traffic scene, techie creates magic

B'luru techie's unique innovation of helmet equipped with camera and AI-based system, capable of detecting traffic rule breaches in real time, catches city police's eye as solution for infractions

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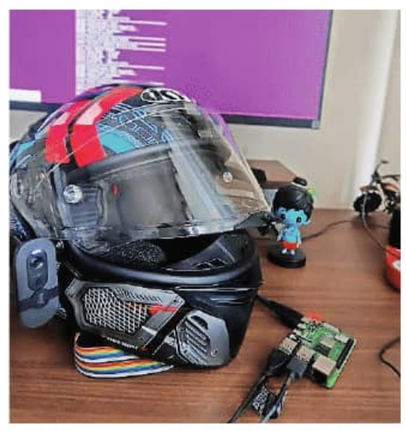
Inset: Techie's self-designed AI-enabled helmet with camera



While many laud AI helmet as creative application of technology for civic good, others highlight concerns around privacy, data misuse and broader implications of public surveillance

The Bengaluru City Police have contacted a software professional after a video of his self-designed AI-enabled helmet went viral on social media. The helmet, created to identify traffic violations using artificial intelligence, caught the attention of law enforcement officials for its potential use in improving road safety enforcement.

The creator of the device, techie Pankaj, shared screenshots online showing that officials from the police commissioner's office had reached out to him, describing the idea as innovative and seeking further details about how the technology functions. The helmet is equipped with a camera and an AI-based system capable of detecting traffic rule breaches in real time. It can capture images of violations, record location and time data, identify vehicle registration numbers, and automatically forward the information to traffic authorities without any manual intervention from the wearer.

The concept sparked extensive discussion on social media platforms. While many users praised the initiative as a creative application of technology for civic good, others voiced concerns around privacy, data misuse, and the broader implications of public surveillance. Some suggested safeguards and regulatory frameworks would be essential if such technology were to be adopted on a larger scale.

What began as an individual technology experiment has now drawn institutional interest, highlighting how citizen-led innovations could play a role in addressing urban challenges such as traffic management and road discipline.

Pankaj Tanwar, in conversation with Bangalore Mirror, said that utter frustration over the lack of discipline drove him to the invention. "I like to drive within the city and go on weekend trips, and whenever I went, I noticed people casually breaking traffic rules. It is a very bad situation, violators putting both our lives at risk," Tanwar said. He then researched the issue to find that violations can be directly reported to the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) through either their official application, on WhatsApp or via email. "However, the problem is — I'm on a bike. It's nearly impossible to stop, click a picture of the violation and then send it over to the traffic police. I began to look for an automated solution," he narrated.

He then installed a camera to his helmet and began working with AI. "It's a two step process. First, the vehicle and violation is detected and confirmed. A second level of verification happens just to be sure, where another system also cross verifies if the violation has occurred," he explained. He said that the system itself then sends a mail to the traffic police including the entire context — a photo of the violation, number plate details, location, date and time stamp. "The traffic police will then manually review it over the next few days and issue a challan," he said. He noted that it took him merely a day to come up with the AI-powered helmet. "I went for a ride on a Saturday morning to come back home at around 10 or 11 am, really frustrated. I began working and was done by the end of the day," he said.

On the question of whether AI can help aid efficient civic enforcement, Pankaj noted that surveillance infrastructure is expensive and the data retrieved often requires a team of people to process it. "With this idea, at one shot, you have thousands of AI-equipped devices doing the monitoring of roads. Unfortunately, fear-driven policies (penalisation) tend to work in Indian societies and the good behaviour is picked up habitually," he said, urging for usage of AI as an aid in enforcement.

VK Kannada Habba wraps up with vibrant celebration

Event concludes after celebrating depth and contemporary significance of Kannada language and culture

SRIDHAR KS

VK Kannada Habba concluded on Sunday after two days of celebrating Kannada language and culture

VK Kannada Habba concluded on Sunday on an energetic and emotionally resonant note, rounding off two days of performances, discussions and literary engagements that drew large crowds and sustained applause. The festival emerged as a vibrant platform celebrating the richness and relevance of Kannada language and culture in contemporary times. After a blockbuster opening on Saturday, the concluding day maintained the momentum with a tightly packed programme that began at 10.30 am. The morning opened with a Yakshagana performance, Sindhura Sangrama, by the Alva's Dinkita Yakshagana Study Centre.

The powerful storytelling, elaborate costumes and rhythmic music held the audience's attention and set the tone for the day.

A key highlight followed with the panel discussion Nade Kannada Nudi Kannada, which examined the present journey and future direction of the Kannada language. Karnataka Sahitya Academy President LN Mukundaraj, language expert Dr LG Meera, writer Shiv Kumar Mavali and anchor Sneha Neelappa Gowda shared their perspectives, with author Kusuma Ayrhalli moderating the session. The discussion sparked thoughtful responses from the audience and underlined the need to keep Kannada rooted yet adaptable.

The afternoon saw the distribution of prizes to winners of the Ugadi short story competition, followed by the release of the anthology Check Mate. The event was attended by noted names including novelist Dr KN Ganeshiah, Kowshik Koodurasthe, film director KM Chaitanya, Prakash K and KB Parashivappa. Music and spoken word carried the festival into the evening. A Dasavani musical journey by Dr Vidyabhushana and Medha, followed by Amara Madhura Gaana, a talk-and-song presentation by Srinivasa Prabhu and Ramachandra Hadapad, kept audiences engaged. The festival concluded with a lively Dhwani Mela by the Beat Guru team, leaving the crowd on a high.

— Prakash VL

Mandatory Moral Science classes spark mixed reactions

While many welcome plan to make Moral Science compulsory from upcoming academic year, some point to curriculum overload and question efficacy of learning values through classroom teaching

The State government's decision to reintroduce Moral Science as a compulsory subject from the next academic year has triggered a wider debate among educators, parents and students. Announcing the move, Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa said the subject would focus on strengthening human values, civic responsibility, health awareness, environmental sensitivity and ethical living among students.

Government view

Speaking about the rationale, Bangarappa said schools play a crucial role beyond academic learning. "Education is not only about marks and competitive exams. It is also about shaping responsible citizens. Moral Science will help children understand values such as empathy, honesty, respect and social duty from a young age," he said. Officials added that the curriculum would be age-appropriate and activity-based, with a focus on real-life situations rather than rote learning.

Support grows

Many teachers have welcomed the move, saying it fills a long-standing gap in the school syllabus. "Students today are under immense academic and social pressure. A structured subject that talks about mental health, ethics and social behaviour can help them cope better," said Geetha S, a government school teacher. She added that classroom discussions under Moral Science could encourage students to express themselves and learn conflict resolution.

Parents, too, have expressed support. "Children are spending more time on screens and social media. Schools should actively teach values like kindness, discipline and responsibility," said Ramesh Kumar, a parent of a Class 6 student. He said Moral Science could help reinforce lessons that families try to teach at home but struggle to sustain consistently.

Student voices

Some students see the subject as a positive addition. "If it is taught through stories, discussions and activities, it will be interesting. We already study many theoretical subjects. This can be more practical," said Ananya, a Class 9 student from a private school. She added that topics such as mental well-being and social awareness are rarely discussed openly in classrooms.

Concerns raised

However, the decision has also drawn criticism. A section of educators is worried about curriculum overload. "Students already have a heavy syllabus. Adding another compulsory subject could increase pressure unless something else is reduced," said Suresh Naik, a high school teacher. He stressed that implementation would be key and warned against turning Moral Science into an exam-oriented subject. Some parents have questioned whether values can be taught formally. "Moral values come from family, society and lived experiences. Making it a compulsory subject may not automatically change behaviour," said Lakshmi Devi, parent of a Class 8 student. She added that poorly designed lessons could become repetitive or ineffective. Students, too, have mixed views. "If it becomes just another subject with tests and exams, students may not take it seriously or may find it boring," said Rahul, a Class 10 student. He suggested project work and open discussions instead of written assessments.

Education experts say the success of Moral Science will depend on how it is taught. "The intent is good, but the approach must be sensitive and inclusive. Teachers will need proper training to handle discussions on ethics, social behaviour and mental health," said an education policy analyst.

Fire safety measures made mandatory in hospitals

The Health Department has made it mandatory for hospital buildings to strictly follow fire safety norms and has issued detailed guidelines for healthcare facilities housed in buildings below 21 metres in height.

The directions apply to hospitals, clinics, primary health check centres, blood banks and diagnostic centres functioning under the Health Department. As per the order, every such building will be subject to inspection by both the Health Department and the Fire and Emergency Services Department.

The guidelines clearly state that all healthcare-related buildings under 21 metres in height, including single-floor clinics and diagnostic centres, must be equipped with fire extinguishers. One six kg fire extinguisher must be installed for every 100 square metres, while a 4.5 kg carbon dioxide fire extinguisher is compulsory near electrical panel boards. These measures are aimed at improving preparedness in densely populated urban neighbourhoods of Bengaluru, where hospitals often function from compact premises. In addition, all buildings must have electronic fire alarm systems, a dedicated water tank with a minimum capacity of 5,000 litres, fire-fighting pipelines and other essential safety equipment.

The department has issued strict instructions to ensure compliance, underlining the need to strengthen fire safety in hospitals and healthcare centres across Bengaluru to protect patients, staff and visitors.

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Home Minister hails Bengaluru as safest city

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Saturday said it was a matter of great pride that Bengaluru had secured the top position among the safest cities in the country for women, citing a report released by a Chennai-based consultancy firm specialising in workplace culture and inclusion. The remarks by the state Home Minister are likely to stir controversy amid the backdrop of the alleged incident involving the stripping and assault of a BJP woman worker in Hubballi.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, he said the firm had released a list of the 'Best Cities for Women in India' based on parameters such as safety, technology and infrastructure. Bengaluru topped the list with a score of 53.29.

Parameshwara congratulated all those who contributed to the achievement, adding that the Karnataka Police had earlier secured the top position for effectively delivering justice. He said Opposition parties make frequent allegations regarding women's safety in Bengaluru, and that the report served as a fitting reply.

He further said special measures were taken during the New Year celebrations to ensure that no untoward incidents took place and that the public did not face inconvenience. Parameshwara added that he personally visited the Bengaluru City Police Command Centre and monitored the situation until 2 am, describing it as a proud moment for the city. **— IANS**

Morning walkers fume as parks shut early

Citizens launch digital push demanding extended access hours following civic order curbing daylight entry windows

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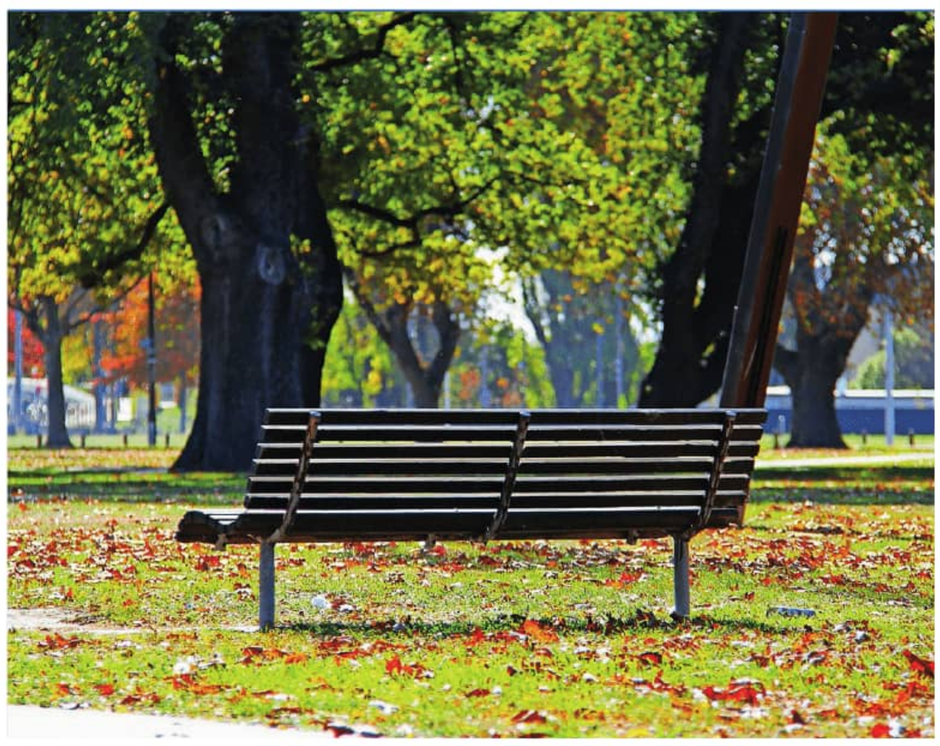

Working professionals, students, caregivers voice exclusion, citing security staff refusals, idle afternoons, lost recreation, urging uniform rules citywide

An online campaign has been launched urging authorities to restore longer park timings in South Bengaluru. The campaign comes after the newly formed Bengaluru South City Corporation revised park timings last month, limiting access to mornings between 5 am and 11 am and evenings from 4 pm to 8 pm.

Until December, parks under the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) were officially open from 5 am to 10 pm, allowing residents to use public green spaces throughout the day. The revised timings, however, have drawn criticism from citizens, who say the change has made parks inaccessible to large sections of the population.

Through social media posts and an open letter, the campaign highlights how working professionals, students, families and informal workers are affected by the restrictions. In the letter addressed to GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao and Bengaluru South City Corporation Commissioner Ramesh KN, IAS, the campaigner @blueringtail wrote: "With the new park timings, parks in South Bengaluru are open for a mere six hours in the morning and four hours in the evening. These timings are suited to just one section of society."

The letter lists several real-life situations, including software engineers returning home late, domestic workers waiting between work shifts, college students seeking affordable public spaces and drivers looking for short breaks during long work hours. "Public parks are not just for morning walkers. Some want to walk, others want to sit and talk. Some want to use the open gyms, others want their children to play," the letter states.

Calling parks "public spaces that must remain public", the campaign argues that limiting access pushes people towards paid spaces such as cafés, while excluding those who cannot afford them. "Bengaluru comprises people with different work timings and aspirations, and public infrastructure must support this diversity," the user wrote.

As part of the campaign, citizens are being encouraged to write to senior officials to demonstrate public demand for change. The key demands include restoring the earlier 5 am to 10 pm timings, updating park signage to reflect official timings, and ensuring uniform rules across all parks, including lake parks.

Meanwhile, several residents pointed out that they were unaware of the new park timings and were denied entry by guards during their visits. "The South Zone has some of the most beautiful, well-maintained and clean parks. Recently, when I visited a park in HSR Layout in the afternoon, I was not allowed entry and was told that parks are shut during the afternoon. This was surprising. What is the point of closing parks in the afternoon when children cannot enjoy them even on weekends?" one resident said.

Raj from Ploggers Army said public parks should offer more flexible hours, particularly during off-peak times. "While certain facilities could be restricted in the afternoon to allow for essential maintenance, the grounds themselves should remain accessible. This would be feasible if the GBA provides robust security and monitoring, complemented by active citizen involvement to ensure the space remains clean and safe," he said.

Authority formed, but meetings missing

Just four months after the formation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority, the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act has already been violated, with the mandatory second GBA meeting not held within the stipulated time. As per the Act, the GBA, chaired by the Chief Minister, must meet at least once every three months. While the first meeting was held on October 10, 2025, the next meeting should have taken place by January 10, 2026. However, there has been no preparation or indication of such a meeting so far, raising questions about compliance with the law and the government's focus on Bengaluru's urban governance.

The October meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, approved key decisions, including the appointment of officials and the delegation of responsibilities to the planning authority. Since then, no further meetings have been convened, despite the Act clearly allowing and encouraging more frequent sittings for faster city development. Officials have acknowledged the delay, with the GBA Chief Commissioner stating that a meeting will be convened soon after securing the Chief Minister's and Deputy Chief Minister's time. Critics argue that the absence of regular meetings reflects a lack of seriousness towards Bengaluru's pressing urban development needs.

Adding to the concern is the lack of transparency. Activists allege that the Act mandates that decisions and minutes of GBA meetings must be made public within three days, but even after three months, details of the first meeting have not been released. Though amendments have been proposed to include senior officials from the urban development and finance departments as GBA members to speed up decision-making, observers point out that without meetings, such intentions remain ineffective. **— BMB**

Students demand cheaper metro passes

Rising travel costs and long commutes have prompted Bengaluru students to demand subsidised metro passes through a new Aam Aadmi Party initiative, Namma Metro Abhinaya. The campaign calls on the state government to make metro travel more affordable for college students.

Launched last week, the signature drive has already collected over 3,000 student signatures. Students say worsening traffic congestion and rising fuel and transport costs are affecting punctuality, attendance and academic life. A student from RC College said, "I live in Austin Town and it takes nearly an hour to reach college. Metro travel would be faster but costs up to ₹3,000 monthly. Reduced fares would help many." Led by the Bengaluru Youth Wing, the initiative seeks student-friendly passes, encouraging public transport use, reducing congestion and improving access to education. **— BMB**

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Rusting vehicles

Marathahalli

Vehicles seized long ago and parked behind the Marathahalli Police Station have been left neglected, rusting, and deteriorating by the day.

Broken footpath

D'Souza Road

The broken footpath outside Vista Tribute on D'Souza Road has remained unattended for over seven months, causing daily inconvenience for pedestrians.

Hazardous junction

Hayes

The dangerous, neglected junction at the Hayes–D'Souza Road intersection has become a potential accident spot for commuters.

₹10 lakh relief for injured homemaker

The Karnataka High Court has enhanced the compensation awarded to a Bengaluru homemaker injured in a road accident, raising the amount to ₹10 lakh with 6% annual interest. The court observed that unpaid domestic work performed by homemakers carries significant economic value and must be recognised while calculating compensation in accident cases.

The petitioner, Hema Kulkarni, sustained serious injuries, including a traumatic brain injury, after being hit by a motorcycle while walking in February 2017. She was hospitalised for over a week, underwent surgery, and required prolonged rest and rehabilitation.

A Motor Accident Claims Tribunal had earlier awarded her ₹6.9 lakh in January 2019. Dissatisfied with the quantum of compensation, Kulkarni approached the High Court, arguing that the amount failed to adequately reflect the severity of her injuries, medical expenses, and loss of normal functioning during recovery.

During the proceedings, the insurance company contended that it could not be held liable as the motorcyclist did not possess a valid driving licence at the time of the accident. While accepting this argument, the court directed the insurer to pay the compensation initially and recover the amount from the vehicle owner later, in line with settled legal principles.

In its ruling, the High Court underscored that homemakers play a vital role in managing households and supporting families, and their contribution cannot be treated as having no monetary value. The enhanced compensation, the court said, reflects this recognition and ensures a more just assessment of the loss suffered by the injured claimant. **–BMB**

IN HIGH COURT

Marriage disputes not penal offence

The Karnataka High Court has quashed criminal proceedings initiated by a woman against her husband and his family, holding that the allegations made in her complaint did not amount to cruelty under criminal law.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by the wife alleging harassment and ill-treatment during the course of their marriage, much of which was spent abroad. Among her claims was the allegation that her husband restricted her diet after childbirth, including preventing her from eating certain foods such as French fries, rice and meat, allegedly over concerns about weight gain. She also cited disagreements over clothing, television viewing and household routines.

The complaint was registered under provisions relating to cruelty to a married woman, intentional insult and the Dowry Prohibition Act. The husband and his relatives subsequently approached the High Court seeking the quashing of the case.

After examining the allegations, the court observed that even if they were accepted as true, they reflected ordinary marital discord rather than conduct of the gravity required to attract criminal liability. The bench noted that everyday disagreements, lifestyle differences and domestic quarrels cannot be treated as cruelty under penal law.

The court also expressed concern over the routine registration of criminal cases in matrimonial disputes without adequate scrutiny, cautioning that such practices could lead to misuse of legal provisions intended to protect women from serious abuse.

In view of these findings, the High Court set aside the FIR and all related proceedings, ruling that continuation of the case would amount to an abuse of the legal process. **–BMB**

All that glitters is not treasure

Gold discovered while digging for a house expansion in Lakkundi, a village renowned for its architectural heritage, is "not treasure", a senior ASI official said.

Ramesh Mulimani, Superintending Archaeologist of the ASI — Dharwad Circle — visited the site a day after a copper pot containing the gold was found.

"Many ornaments are broken and were found in the kitchen area. Ancestors often hid jewellery beside stoves as they had no treasury. This seems the same," Mulimani said.

The government has taken possession of 470 grams of gold, including necklaces, bangles and earrings, now in safe custody. An eighth-standard student spotted the pot. **–PTI**

Vahan doesn't have pollution under control

A prolonged technical failure in the integration of the Vahan portal with Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificates has pushed thousands of vehicle owners and PUC centres in Karnataka, especially in and around Bengaluru, into severe difficulty. Karnataka State Travels Owners' Association president K Radhakrishna Holla said, "The issue has badly affected inter-state tourist and commercial vehicles that depend on seamless digital verification. Despite possessing valid PUC certificates, vehicle owners are facing penalties, harassment and delays as the records are not reflected on the Vahan portal, the Transport Development Portal or the mParivahan app."

Raising serious concern, the Karnataka State Travels Owners' Association, Karnataka State Air Pollution Testing Centre Owners' Association and the Bangalore Petroleum Dealers Association have jointly urged the government to intervene immediately. They stated that the problem is entirely due to a system-level technical fault and not the fault of vehicle owners. At the same time, an acute shortage of PUC holograms has forced several authorised testing centres, including many in Bengaluru neighbourhoods, to temporarily shut operations, threatening livelihoods and leading to job losses.

The organisations have warned that weakening the PUC system could also encourage fake certificates, undermining environmental protection efforts. They have demanded the immediate integration of PUC data with Vahan and mParivahan, an uninterrupted supply of holograms until a new system is in place, the suspension of penalties on vehicle owners until the issue is resolved, and the rollout of a secure, tamper-proof technology platform. **–BMB**

One cop suspended every two days

On average, more than four police personnel have been suspended every week in Karnataka over the last three years, raising serious concerns about misconduct within the force. Police records show that over 650 officers and personnel were suspended between 2023 and 2025 for their alleged involvement in criminal and serious offences, while criminal cases were registered against at least 86 policemen during the same period. From DSPs to police constables, a total of 666 personnel faced suspension, translating to roughly one suspension every two days.

The numbers reveal a steady rise, with 188 suspensions in 2023, 242 in 2024 and 236 in 2025. Criminal cases were filed against 44 police personnel in 2024 and 42 in 2025 for offences ranging from dacoity, robbery and kidnapping to extortion and bribery. Several high-profile cases, including policemen accused of ATM cash robberies, gold jewellery heists, taking bribes for post-mortems and partying with known criminals, have further dented public trust. Senior officers admit that the growing list of suspensions and criminal cases involving those meant to uphold the law is triggering public anxiety and eroding confidence in the police system. **–BMB**

Cold wave sparks 30% surge in respiratory cases

Cold wave triggers rise in flu, coughs, and heart emergencies as children and seniors face heightened health risks across Bengaluru

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Hospitals report influenza H3N2 dominance, travel-linked transmission, delayed treatment complications, heightened danger confronting youngsters, seniors, immunity-compromised patients citywide

With temperatures dipping sharply during early mornings and evenings, city doctors are reporting a noticeable rise in health complications, particularly among the elderly and children. A sudden spell of intense cold has triggered an increase in cases of cold, cough and fever across Bengaluru. Medical professionals say many of these cases point to the viral influenza H3N2 variant, prompting advisories for citizens to wear N95 masks, especially while travelling or visiting crowded places. After a brief respite, the cold has intensified again over the past week, leading to a steady surge in seasonal illnesses.

Viral spread

Doctors say the infection spreads easily through close contact, airborne droplets, coughing and touch. While most seasonal fevers subside within a week, the number of people falling ill has increased significantly. Hospitals are witnessing a rise in patients with respiratory complaints, and physicians caution that symptoms are often mild at the onset and ignored, resulting in prolonged illness.

Dr M Ravi Kumar, Senior Consultant in Internal Medicine at Sakra World Hospital, told Bangalore Mirror that January 2026 has seen a sharp rise in health complications due to a severe cold wave, with temperatures in some areas dipping into single digits. He said the intense cold has led to a 10–15 per cent increase in heart-related emergencies, as cold air narrows blood vessels and raises blood pressure, increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes, especially during early morning hours. At the same time, hospitals are seeing nearly double the usual number of patients with respiratory issues such as seasonal flu, persistent cough and pneumonia. Children and senior citizens remain the most vulnerable, with fluctuating temperatures and poor air quality worsening their condition.

According to Dr N Puviarasan, Scientist and Head at the India Meteorological Centre, Bengaluru is likely to witness partly cloudy skies in the coming days. Fog or mist is expected during early morning hours in some areas, with maximum and minimum temperatures hovering around 25°C and 14°C respectively.

Post-New Year celebrations and holiday travel have also contributed to the spike in respiratory infections, said Dr Sridhar Srinivasan, consultant general physician at Vasavi Hospitals. He noted that out of nearly ten patients seen daily, five to six present symptoms such as nasal congestion, dry cough, sore throat, fever and earaches. He attributed the rise to air travel, out-of-station movement and public gatherings during December and the New Year, adding that untreated mild symptoms often lead to a persistent dry cough lasting two to three weeks. Hospitals are also reporting nearly a 30 per cent surge in respiratory infections, including H3N2 and pneumonia, during the current cold wave, with senior citizens and children facing a higher risk of sudden and potentially life-threatening complications.

Medical advisory

Pulmonologist Dr Karthik Gowda said people with low immunity, elderly patients and those with pre-existing medical conditions are at higher risk of developing pneumonia. He said hospitals are currently seeing around 20 cases of viral influenza and related infections, with H3N2 emerging as the most common variant. Health officials have been asked to intensify public awareness drives during the winter months to prevent further spread. Dr Gowda added that while H3N2 caused major concern around seven years ago, the population now has better immunity. Over the past month, many have been affected, but overall resistance to the virus has improved, he said.

Dry season puts Bengaluru's forests on edge

As summer approaches, the Forest Department has stepped up preparations to prevent forest fires in areas surrounding Bengaluru, particularly in Bengaluru Rural district, which has over 20,400 hectares of forest cover.

Forest regions spread across Doddaballapur, Nelamangala, Hoskote and nearby hill tracts, including the Makali and Shivagange foothills, are vulnerable during summer as lush green vegetation dries up. While these areas appear vibrant during the monsoon, dry grass and scrub increase the risk of fire in peak summer, prompting advance planning by the department.

According to officials, preventive measures are already in place across forest zones close to the city. Staff have been trained, fire lines created and fire watchers deployed in sensitive pockets. Satellite-based monitoring systems are being used to detect fire incidents quickly and respond without delay.

Fire signboards have been installed, and additional field personnel are being appointed to strengthen on-ground vigilance. These efforts are aimed at ensuring that even small fire incidents are controlled before they spread.

A forest official said, "Special attention is also being given to identifying water sources such as lakes and ponds near forest stretches to ensure quick access during emergencies." Officials have noted that many fire incidents are man-made, either due to miscreants or the practice of burning dry grass by people living along forest edges to encourage fresh growth during the next rains.

The department plans to keep a close watch on such activities and take strict action where required, while also creating awareness among local communities to protect forests in Bengaluru's neighbouring regions from avoidable summer fires. — BMB

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Foes to friends

There are no permanent friends or foes in politics, and the Ballari incident seems to be the latest proof. Once bitter enemies, Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy and mining baron-turned-MLA Gali Janardhana Reddy are suddenly on the same page, thanks to the Ballari shootout controversy. Kumaraswamy's aggressive press conference, in which he defended Reddy and tore into the Congress government, set the tone.

What followed raised eyebrows across the political circuit. Reddy reportedly called HDK to thank him profusely, calling his support a lifeline. Kumaraswamy, sources say, returned the favour with words of reassurance and a call to take on the Congress together. With HDK alleging a plot to frame Reddy, including claims of a double post-mortem, Ballari's political tremors may only just be getting started. Interestingly, Reddy and former minister Sriramulu, who were once the best of friends, had recently become foes, but this incident has brought them together again.

Border heat

What began as a crackdown on illegal sand mining quickly turned into a border showdown near Gurumitkal in Yadgir district. Karnataka police, acting on inputs about sand smuggling, recently found themselves in a heated verbal duel with Telangana police along the inter-State border.

Tempers flared as Telangana personnel questioned jurisdiction and appeared to side with the miners, triggering brief tension among locals and officers alike. However, Karnataka police stood firm, seized three tractors and registered three cases against the offenders. The Telangana police eventually retreated, leaving behind yet another reminder that borders blur when sand and money are involved.

Chair war

What was meant to be a routine foundation stone-laying event for a railway overbridge near Hitnal spiralled into high drama recently as BJP and Congress leaders clashed over protocol. The tension peaked when angry Congress workers allegedly flung a chair at Union Minister V Somanna, forcing security personnel to intervene and block it just in time. The chaos did not stop there. District in-charge minister Shivaraj Tangadagi and MLA Raghavendra Hitnal locked horns with the Union Minister, accusing him of sidelining elected representatives. The omission of the district minister, MP and MLA from the invitation list proved to be the spark. The result: shouting matches, frayed tempers and a political event that literally turned into a chair-throwing contest.

Threat to sorry

A fortnight after his fiery outburst, Magadi MLA HC Balakrishna has hit rewind. The legislator, who had threatened that tahsildar Sharath Kumar would be beaten with slippers if farmers' issues were not resolved, publicly apologised during a government staff sports event earlier this week.

The flashpoint was farmers' anger over unresolved land records, khata transfers and sewage flowing into lakes. Protests outside the tahsildar's office escalated into a tense meeting where the MLA lashed out, questioned the officer's work and made the controversial remark. With backlash brewing, Balakrishna has now opted for damage control, owning up and saying sorry — at least in public.

Village flavour

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in a light-hearted moment with reporters, said he was unaware of his supporters distributing 'naati koli' palav. Asked about the gesture, he smiled and pointed out that in villages, country chicken is usually cooked only when relatives visit. "I am from a village, so eating 'naati koli' and 'ragi mudde' was natural for me," he said, adding that these have always been part of rural food habits. The Chief Minister remarked that what was once an ordinary village fair is now drawing attention simply because of his position. "This is how villagers eat. Because I am the Chief Minister, it is getting some publicity," he said, offering a candid glimpse into his roots while brushing aside the fuss around the food. — Sridhar Vivan

Two years on, chargesheet remains pending

Alleged delay in filing of chargesheet in land dispute despite prolonged wait raises concerns

| Y Maheswara Reddy
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Complainant alleges delay in officials' part, while police claim lack of cooperation from complainant

Police are ordinarily expected to file a chargesheet within 60 to 90 days of registering a First Information Report (FIR) to enable timely disposal of cases in court. However, the Robertsonpet police have reportedly delayed filing a chargesheet in an alleged fake power of attorney case. Despite the FIR being registered on June 17, 2023, and submitted to the JMFC Court in Kolar, the chargesheet remains pending even after two and a half years, with officials citing one reason after another.

The FIR was registered following a complaint by Joseph Shantharaj, alleging that Prasanna Kumar Samuel and Vincent Vinodh Kumar of Bengaluru, along with Robin Marshal of Robertsonpet, KGF, colluded to transfer the khata of 2 acres and two guntas of land (Survey No 4/4) at DK Plantation into the name of Prasanna Kumar Samuel. A report submitted by the Robertsonpet Sub-Inspector of Police to the State Advocate General's Office states that the accused fabricated documents to alienate the land. It further notes that accused number three, Robin Marshal, has sought permission from the KGF Development Authority to construct a school on the property.

The accused approached the High Court seeking to quash the criminal proceedings against them. On August 24, 2023, the court issued a stay order, following which the Robertsonpet police halted their investigation. However, the stay was lifted on October 28, 2025. Yet, even two months after the order was vacated, the police are allegedly yet to file the chargesheet.

There is speculation that pressure from influential individuals and financial sway is behind the delay in filing the chargesheet. It is further alleged that some people from Bengaluru recently visited the Robertsonpet Police Station to persuade officials to submit a 'B report' in the case.

However, Robertsonpet Sub-Inspector of Police denied the allegations and rumours. "Some people visited the police station as part of the investigation and enquiry. I have recorded the statements of accused persons and sought to submit a few more documents in support of their arguments. I am not getting the required cooperation from the complainant. I have advised him to submit some documents, which he is yet to submit," said the inspector.

When contacted, Joseph Shantharaj said that he had submitted all the documents to the authorities concerned.

SOCIALTATTLE

WHAT'S TWEETING

An X user shared a post showing how Bannerghatta Road came to a complete standstill with long jams, blaring honks, and commuters stuck — while on the other side, a Pink Line prototype train made a surprise appearance.

THAT WENT VIRAL

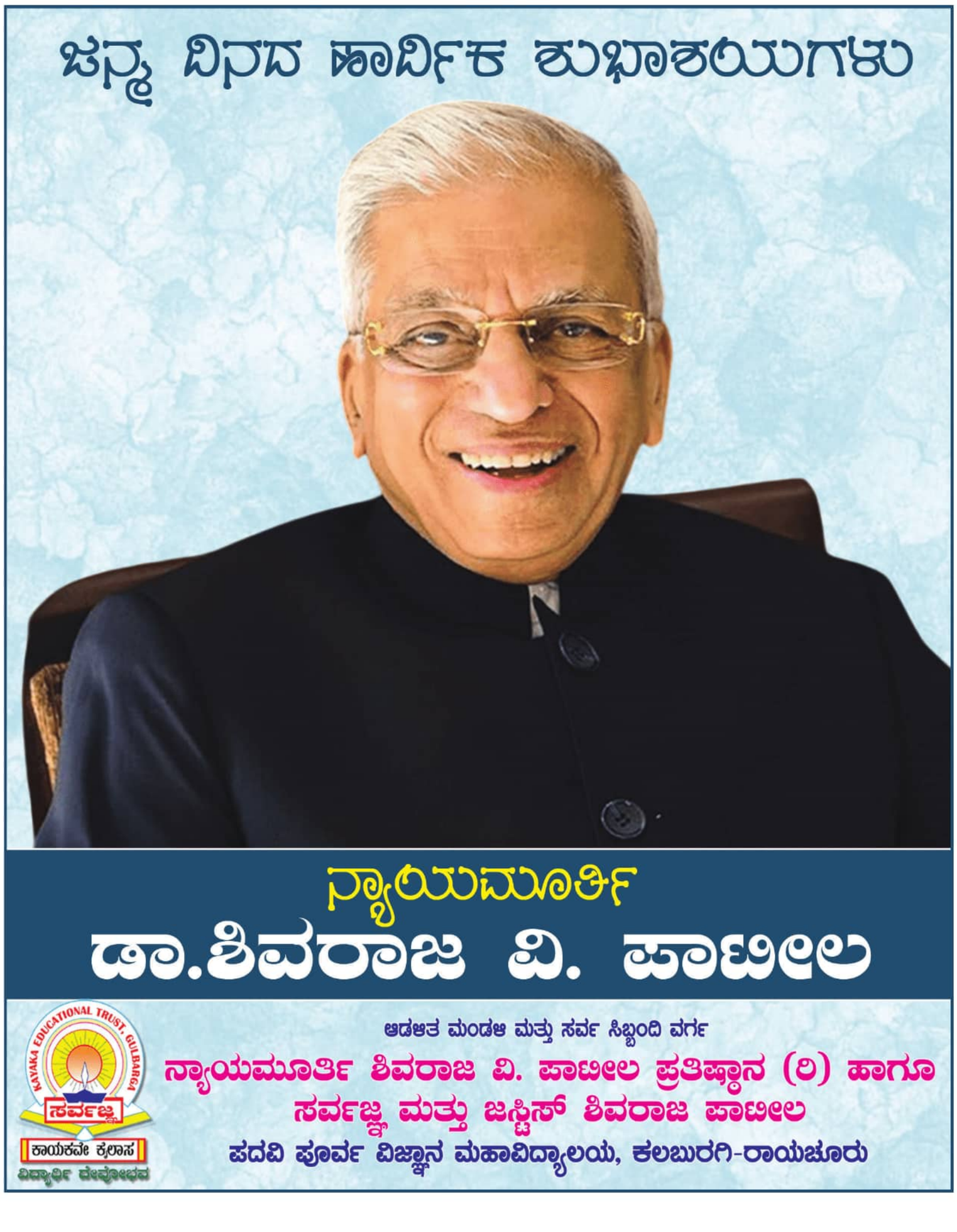
@kripalammana took to X to spotlight an 18-year-old gem in JP Nagar — Swathi Restaurant, where owner Vasant Shetty handpicks the fresh catch each morning to serve a hearty Mangalorean feast that's light on the pocket and big on flavour.

kripal amanna @kripalaman... · 22h
Honest seafood at honest prices!
I've discovered an 18-year find in South Bengaluru - Swathi Restaurant in JP Nagar. Owner Vasant Shetty handpicks the fresh catch every morning for a robust Mangalorean feast that's light on the pocket.
Watch the episode here: Show more

After the formation of Kasavanahalli ward in the South and East zones, South Bengaluru has been left

SaveBellandur(ಬೆಳ್ಳಂದೂರು ಉಳಿ... · 4h
After formation of #Kasavanahalli ward 31 in @comm_blr_south, both South & @EASTCITYCORP are ignoring govnce. All funds are taken over by east leaving no mnce for south to administer this ward.
@MALimbavali continues to just blame govt without any action,what next
@GBAChiefComm ?
0:02

ignored while funds flow East. No money, no administration, only blame games, pointed out X user @kdevforum



Man found dead in burnt car in Davanagere; police suspect suicide

The charred body of a man was found in a car on Sunday, with police suspecting suicide.

The body is suspected to be Chandrashekar Sankol (56), a local BJP leader and former corporator, police said.

Forensic teams have collected samples, and the identity of the body will be confirmed after laboratory tests, they added.

Preliminary investigations suggest that Sankol may have set himself on fire, and police said both the body and the vehicle were destroyed in the blaze.

Sankol was reportedly facing financial difficulties and family disputes related to heavy debt. Sources said his son and daughter, both in their early twenties, had attempted suicide earlier.

After they were admitted to the hospital for treatment, Sankol went to his farm, where the incident occurred.

The burnt car and body were found on a plot of land near Hadadi Road. Police said Sankol had reportedly gone to his farm in Bisseri village in the taluk on Saturday night.

Investigations are underway. **PTI**

Auto drivers, lodges thrive on flesh trade industry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

occupied by transgenders, most of the stone benches, meant for BMTC commuters, are occupied by women sex workers. The problem is that the sex workers occupy the benches till they get customers thus leaving it occupied and causing inconvenience to the BMTC commuters. "I have been waiting for the bus for more than 30 minutes. I am finding it difficult to stand waiting for the bus. All the benches are occupied by these women," said Pushpa S, a commuter.

Efforts made, but...

The BMTC officials tried to chase away sex workers and transgender on December 16 but that didn't pan out. The sex workers and transgenders protested and told the BMTC officers that they have been using the place for soliciting customers for many years. With no other option, the BMTC officer lodged a complaint with Upparpet Police on the same day.

The Upparpet Police registered a first information report (FIR) against Rekha and others under the Sections 132, 3(5), 351 and 352 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. However, there is no respite for the BMTC officers and commuters since Upparpet Police has not taken any measures.

It may be recalled that Upparpet Police Station had taken some measures to end this menace. Bangalore Mirror published a story in 2018 about how the then Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Ravi D Channannavar had deployed Obavva Squad in April, 2018, as a pilot project at KG Bus station. However, the squad is not active anymore.

When informed about the nuisance, the Upparpet Police Inspector said that investigation is in progress on the complaint lodged by the BMTC officer. "I am not aware of Obavva Pade but am making efforts to end this menace," the Police Inspector said.

Sex workers engaging customers at KG Bus Station premises; Used condoms behind the public toilet at KG Bus Station

Rs 500 for one km

A few auto rickshaw drivers are making a killing by exploiting sex workers and their customers. This correspondent was told by the BMTC official that these auto rickshaw drivers are not interested to ply auto rickshaws for hire for other people. Their focus is to ply sex workers and their clients to lodges located at Cottonpet which is barely one km away from the Kempe Gowda Bus Station. They collect Rs 500 for plying one sex worker and her customer. One can find a group of people, representing lodges at Cottonpet, loitering in front of a restaurant at Kempe Gowda Bus Station. Their focus is to ensure sex workers take customers to their lodges where a space is provided for a few minutes for Rs 1,500. Some priests too were seen wandering on the Kempe Gowda Bus Station premises to find sex workers.

Sex workers shouldn't become nuisance

Geetha M, Founder of Sadhana Mahila Sanghatane, an organisation working for sex workers welfare, said that she would not support sex workers who create a nuisance at public places. "I am of the opinion that no woman opts to become a sex worker voluntarily. Reasons to opt for sex work vary from one sex worker to the other. The sex workers should solicit customers without causing inconvenience to the BMTC commuters," said Geetha.

Vulnerable people

Sex workers and transgenders prefer soliciting north Indians and people from North Karnataka. It is easy for the sex workers to make out whether the customers are Hindi speaking people or from North Karnataka. Hanumantha Poojari from Kalaburagi complained to this correspondent on Saturday evening. "I was walking on foot overbridge. One of the transgenders grabbed my hand and took me to a nearby abandoned place. I begged them to spare me. I gave some money to them to escape," said Poojari.

No police

Many people complained that they find no police keeping a vigil on sex workers and transgenders. There is a police outpost at the Kempe Gowda Bus Station but it has been shut for quite some time. Bangalore Mirror had reported in 2025 that the police presence is scanty here. The authorities have assured passengers that they would reopen or construct a new outpost and police officers have also promised to deploy special squads to keep Kempe Gowda Bus Station premises free from disturbances, but the disturbances recur everyday with no solution in sight.

Environmentalists demand strict action against polluters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

pollution control measures, allowing the damage to continue unchecked. Activists point out the contradiction that while large-scale protests erupt over Cauvery water sharing with other states, there has been no sustained movement to protect the river itself.

For Bengalureans, this comes as a shock. "We fight every summer for tanker water and pray for Cauvery releases. To hear that the river is being polluted at the source is frightening. All our water planning collapses if the quality of Cauvery water itself is compromised," said Nina Joseph, a college student. Suresh Kumar from Jayanagar said, "We pay for water, we worry about shortages, but no one talks about protecting the river. Bengaluru will pay the price for this neglect sooner or later."

Prasanna Bhatt of the Kodagu Development Committee said the lack of a strong legal framework is at the heart of the problem.

"There are laws to protect animals, but no exclusive, enforceable law to protect a living river like the Cauvery. Elected representatives and officials have shown indifference. For the first time, our committee has launched a protest solely for Cauvery protection, and it will continue until a proper law is enacted," he said.

MLA and senior advocate AS Ponnanna admitted the seriousness of the situation. "Due to public irresponsibility, the Cauvery is getting polluted every day. Protecting the river is everyone's responsibility.

We will hold discussions with officials and prepare a concrete action plan to control pollution and safeguard Cauvery river," he said.

Environmental experts warn that in the absence of strict legal action, pollution will continue. At present, village-level officials often limit themselves to verbal warnings.

"Unless dumping sewage into rivers becomes a punishable offence with real consequences, nothing will change," said an environmentalist based in Bengaluru. For Bengaluru, the message is stark. Every drop that flows from city taps begins its journey upstream. If the Cauvery continues to be poisoned at its origin, the impact will eventually be felt in every home, hospital and school in the city.

"What is unfolding in Kodagu today is no longer a distant rural issue. It is a warning sign flashing right at Bengaluru's doorstep," said Joseph.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Vimal Vinod Garg, S/o Vinod Garg, residing at Temple Bells, Bangalore, have changed my name to Vimal Garg with effect from Jan 2026.

WE, JAYANTH K and SARANYA P both husband and wife Residing at No. 34, 6th Cross, Lalbahadur Shastri Nagar, Indiranagar 2nd stage, Bangalore-38 hereby state that in my minor's Son J DIVESH's school record the Fathers's name is mentioned as JAYANTH KRISHNAMURTHY instead of JAYANTH K, Mother's Name is mentioned as SARANYA PICHANDI instead of SARANYA P and his name is mentioned as DIVESH JAYANTH instead of J DIVESH. Names have been rectified as said above vide affidavit dated 10-01-2026 before Notary B.M.Chandrashekar, Bangalore

I, Anshu s/o Kumar Arvindam Sinha, #201, 3, Silver Spring Layout, Marathalli, Banglore - 560037(Karnataka) have changed my name to Anshu Sinha by certificate no. IN-KA45947907350292Y on dated 08/01/2026.

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Over the past six years, Jio has diversified into artificial intelligence and raised funds from well-known investors

Ambani's Reliance Jio considers 2.5% public offering in 2026

Reliance Jio Platforms is considering an initial public offering this year that would float 2.5% of the company, people familiar with the matter said, a move that could make it the country's largest-ever IPO worth more than $4 billion.

The company, led by Mukesh Ambani, is the parent of India's largest telecom operator Reliance Jio - with more than 500 million users. Its debut is the country's most highly anticipated IPO this year.

In November, investment bank Jefferies estimated that Reliance Jio's valuation stood at $180 billion. At that valuation, a 2.5% stake sale would raise $4.5 billion, dwarfing Hyundai Motor India's $3.3 billion IPO in 2024.

Reliance Jio Platforms led by Mukesh Ambani, is the parent of India's largest telecom operator Reliance Jio

Over the past six years, Jio has diversified into artificial intelligence and raised funds from well-known investors including KKR, General Atlantic, Silver Lake and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority.

Reliance would like to list only 2.5% of Jio's shares given the large size of the company, the sources said, even though a proposal from India's market regulator to reduce the minimum size of share sales for large companies seeking IPOs to 2.5% from 5% is awaiting approval from the finance ministry.

"The preference is to list 2.5% at this point if the law gets changed as a smaller amount creates more pricing tension," one of the sources with direct knowledge said, adding that some bankers were pitching a valuation of $200 billion to $240 billion for the business, though Reliance hasn't decided on a firm number. Reliance did not respond to Reuters requests for comment. The sources declined to be named as they were not authorised to speak publicly. Typically around 75% to 80% of Jio Platforms annual revenues come from its telecoms business.

Red-hot Indian IPO market

It has not been decided if the Jio IPO would be a so-called offer-for-sale, which allows existing shareholders to sell their shares to the public, or if it would also involve the issuance of new stock. Hyundai's India IPO, for example, was an offer-for-sale and did not raise new funds.

The Jio listing would add to strong momentum in India's IPO market over the last couple of years; it ranked as the world's No. 2 primary equity issuance market in 2025, raising $21.6 billion as of December 18, according to LSEG data.

EYE ON IPO

Reliance also plans to list its retail unit, but that is unlikely before 2027 or 2028, sources have previously told Reuters.

In 2019, Ambani first flagged plans to list Jio within five years. Last year, Reuters reported that he delayed the offering beyond 2025 as the company wanted a higher valuation by expanding into other niche digital businesses.

2 banks working on prospectus

Reliance Jio is also set to lock horns with Elon Musk, who is expected to launch the Starlink internet service in India in the coming months. Jio has also partnered Nvidia to develop AI infrastructure.

Reliance would like to list only 2.5% of Jio's shares given the large size of the company, sources say, though proposal from market regulator to reduce minimum size of share sales for large firms seeking IPOs to 2.5% from 5% is in the offing

In August, Ambani said Jio would list in the "first half of 2026". The listing timeline depends on market conditions, one of the sources said.

Although formal appointments have yet to be made, bankers from Morgan Stanley and India's Kotak are already working with Reliance on drafting the Jio IPO papers, which can be a drawn-out process, a fifth source with direct knowledge of the situation said.

Reliance is waiting for the 2.5% public float rule to be cleared by the finance ministry and the size of the sale could change in the coming months, the person added.

Reliance expects many foreign investors who invested in the company in recent years to seek an exit via the IPO, the person said.

Morgan Stanley and Kotak did not respond to Reuters requests for comment. **-Reuters**

RBI advocates disclosure of NPA, inspection info; banks oppose

Four major banks -- Bank of Baroda, RBL Bank, Yes Bank and State Bank of India -- have approached the CIC objecting to the disclosure of information such as the list of defaulters and NPA, penalties and inspection reports, even as the RBI termed the records "liable to be disclosed" under the RTI Act.

RTI applicants Dheeraj Mishra, Vathiraj, Girish Mittal and Radha Raman Tiwari had filed separate applications with the RBI, seeking information, such as the top 100 NPAs, willful defaulters of Yes Bank, the inspection report of the SBI and RBL, and documents relating to a Rs 4.34 crore monetary penalty imposed following statutory inspection findings from the Bank of Baroda, respectively, among others.

These banks appealed before the Central Information Commission, after the bankers' bank found that the information sought by RTI Applicants could be disclosed under the provisions of the Right to Information Act.

Information Commissioner Khushwant Singh Sethi referred the matter to a larger bench of the CIC to adjudicate on the issues raised by the banks.

In a series of interim orders, Sethi noted that similar matters were earlier heard by a double bench. Consequently, all cases have been referred to the Chief Information Commissioner for consideration by a larger bench, with disclosure stayed till final decisions are issued.

The outcome of these proceedings is expected to have a far-reaching impact on banking transparency, depositor rights and regulatory accountability, particularly at a time when public scrutiny of NPAs, penalties and supervisory lapses remains intense.

The RBI had sought the views of the banks before disclosure under the Third Party consent provision under Section 11 of the transparency law, under which a public authority seeks the view of the party whose details are being sought by the applicant.

The banks approached the CIC, the country's highest appellate body in RTI matters, with their appeals challenging the RBI's view, which said the information was "liable to be disclosed" under the provisions of the RTI Act, citing the Supreme Court judgement in the Jayantilal N. Mistry case, which is binding on it.

The banks claimed that disclosing regulatory information would harm their commercial interests.

In one such case, Bank of Baroda (BoB) challenged the RBI's decision to disclose documents relating to a Rs 4.34 crore monetary penalty imposed following statutory inspection findings.

RTI applicant Radha Raman Tiwari had sought copies of "cases of non-compliance, as recorded in Statutory Inspection for Supervisory Evaluation (ISE 2021)," along with show-cause notices and records evidencing recovery of the penalty.

While BoB objected to disclosure, claiming the information was "confidential and sensitive," the RBI rejected the argument outright.

The RBI Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) recorded that the bank's contention that disclosure "may have an adverse impact on the bank's business, marketability of the bank's product and may hamper the competitive position of the bank, is not tenable."

The RBI further noted that information exempt under Sections 8(1)(d), (e) and (j) of the RTI Act had already been identified and severed, and therefore "the objections of the BoB are not sustainable".

BoB has since moved the Supreme Court, arguing that the landmark Jayantilal N Mistry judgment, which mandates disclosure of RBI inspection reports, may be reconsidered.

Taking note of this, the CIC observed that the issue "needs deliberation by a larger bench" and temporarily stayed disclosure until final adjudication.

A similar dispute arose involving RBL Bank, which objected to the disclosure of its inspection reports for 2013-14 and 2016-17 sought by RTI applicant Vathiraj.

The RBI, however, relied heavily on Supreme Court precedent, saying that "there is no fiduciary relationship with the RBI and other banks" and that inspection reports fall squarely under the RTI Act. The RBI highlighted that the SC order had said,"the Respondents are duty-bound to furnish all information relating to inspection reports".

Yes Bank has also approached the CIC, objecting to the disclosure of data sought by Dheeraj Mishra.

The RBI rejected Yes Bank's confidentiality argument, saying unequivocally that "RTI Act, 2005, overrides all earlier laws in order to achieve its objective".

The SBI argued that the Supreme Court had not examined exemptions under Section 8(1)(j). The RBI countered this by pointing out that the apex court had clearly ruled that it is "not in a fiduciary relationship with any bank" and must uphold public interest. **-PTI**

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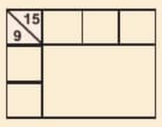
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



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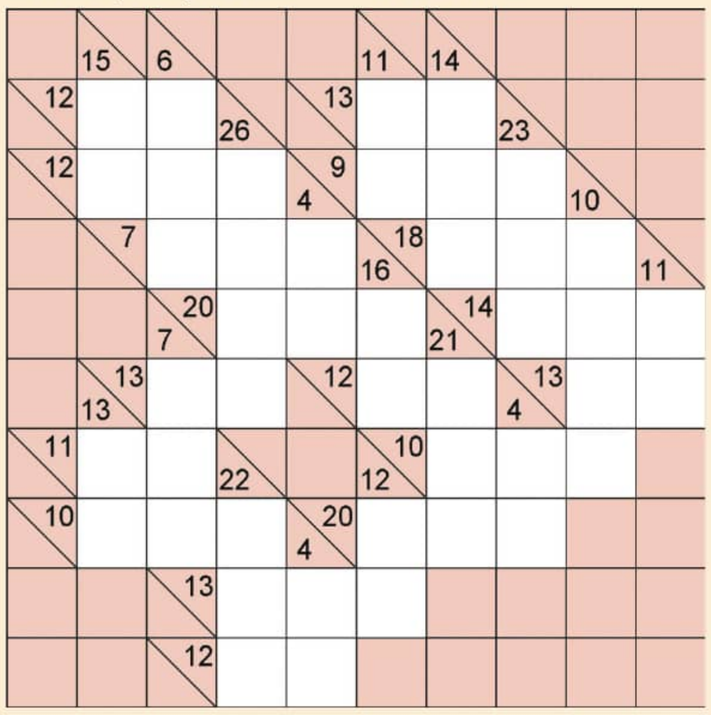
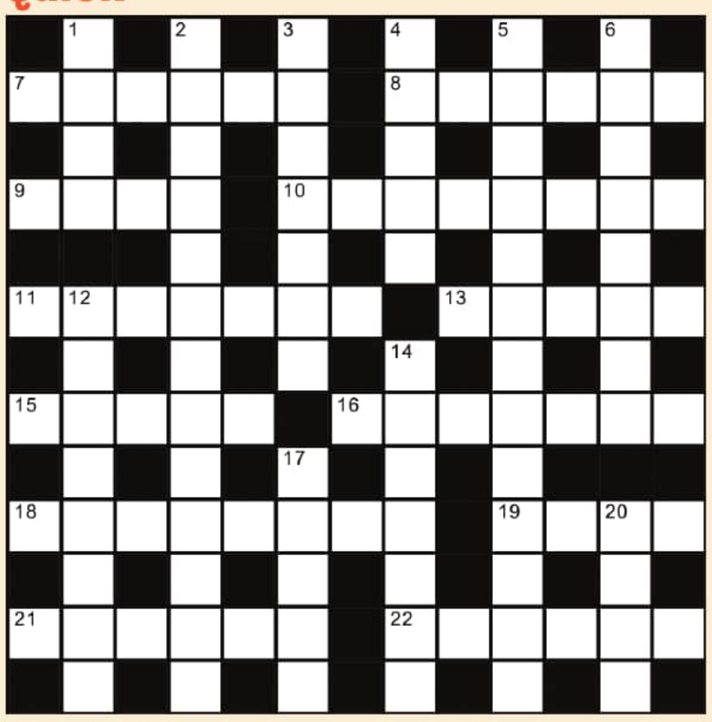


Quick



ACROSS

7 Modify (6)
8 The State Archaeological ____ is located in Cubbon Park (6)
9 Disturbance (4)
10 Defensive mounds (8)
11 Type of poster used in advertising (7)
13 Literary effort (5)
15 Musical composition (5)
16 Suffer greatly (7)
18 Italian artist ____ da Vinci (8)
19 Drags behind (4)
21 Conceive and create? (6)
22 Ransacked (6)

DOWN

1 The thing (4)
2 Not previously known or practised (13)
3 Italian F1 team (7)
4 Prayer leaders of Islam (5)
5 Arranged killing (13)
6 Wedding ceremony (8)
12 At a __ __ : in an uncertain situation (5,3)
14 Dishonourable (7)
17 Authored (5)
20 Seven days (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: U EQUALS T

UGO ZQBHBUNXT XTCXEZ YBY OPBZU, XTCXEZ CBTT. BU BZ OUOHAXT, BU BZ DGXAIOTOZZ.

Linemaro

Hope your day is as nice as you

Mindchow

The highest form of ignorance is when you reject something you don't know anything about

Joke of the day

In a British hotel, the words "Can I help you sir?" mean roughly: "What the hell do you want?"

Loop

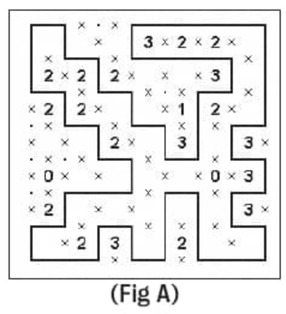
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

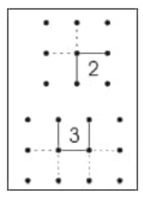
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

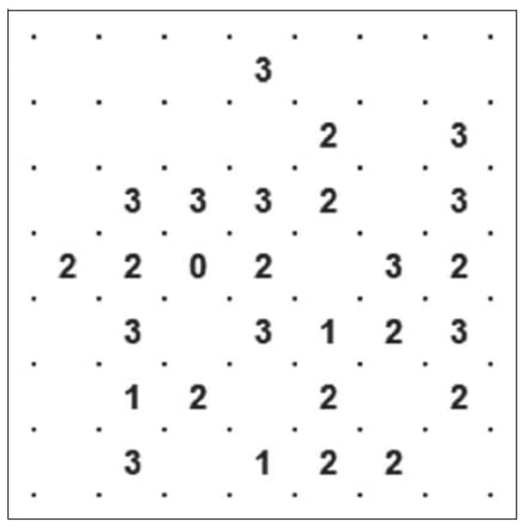
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



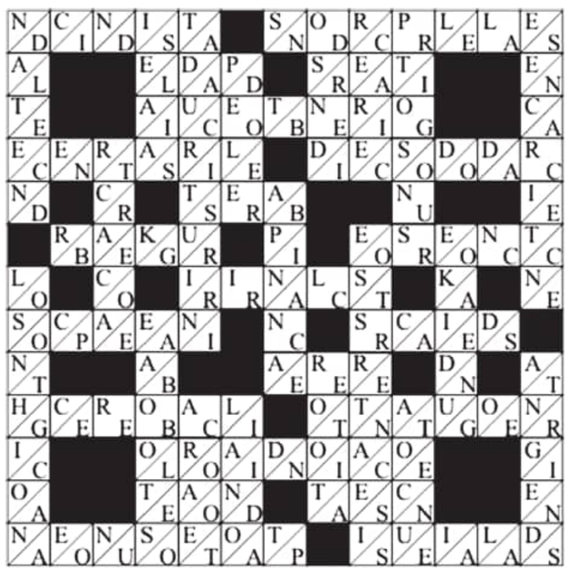
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5 K
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

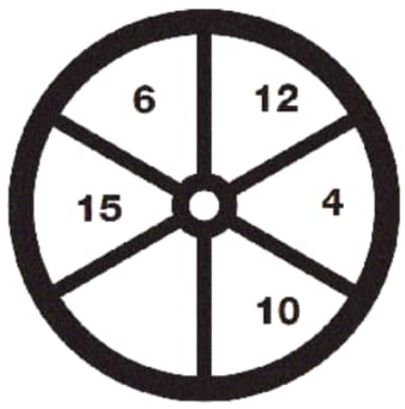
1 Talks; 6 Lohan; 7 Oaten; 8 Wagon; 9 Glued

DOWN

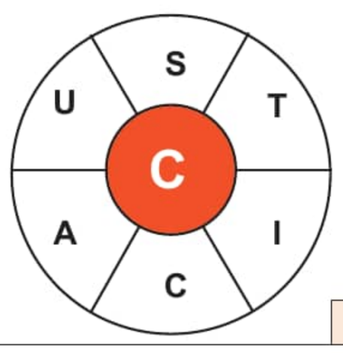
1 H laws; 2 A tout; 3 Anglo; 4 No gel; 5 Ad Ken

Mensapuzzle

Which number goes in the empty segment?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

02 Average; 03 Good; 04 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

			9		2			
	3	7				9	1	
8		5		1		4		6
	1		5	9	6		8	
	8		2	7	3		4	
3		9		8		1		2
	4	8				3	7	
			1		9			

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 7

3 4 9 9

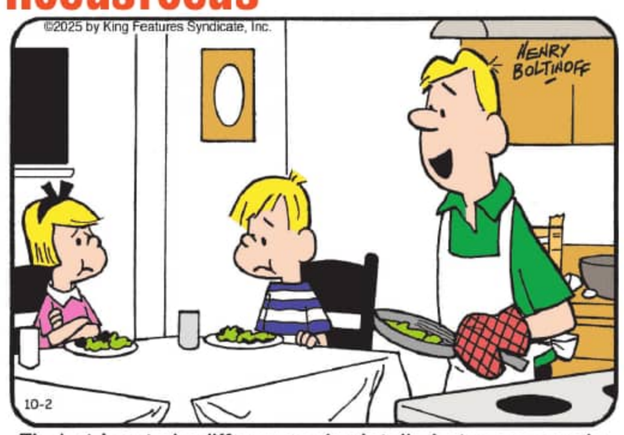
Medium = 6

1 2 7 7

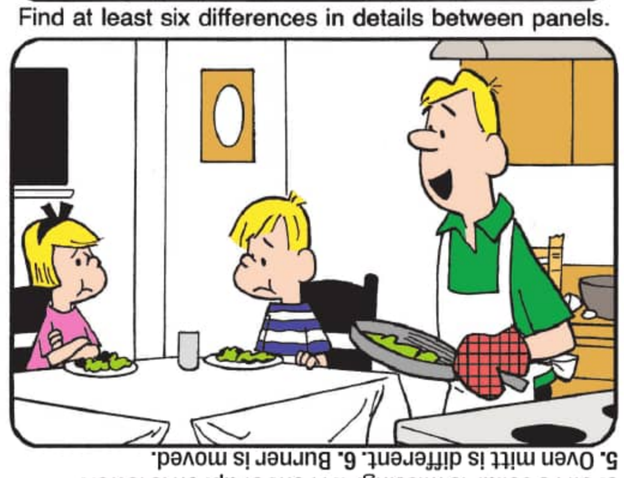
Hard = 54

2 3 9 6

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



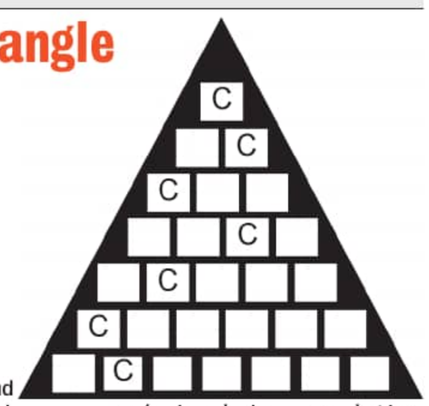
Differences: 1. Pan is larger. 2. Glass is missing. 3. Girl's collar is missing. 4. Front of apron is lower. 5. Oven mitt is different. 6. Burner is moved.

Riddler

What is the meaning of this rebus?
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQUSTRVWXYZ

Alpha triangle

1 Third letter
2 Account, abbr.
3 Road vehicle
4 Track event
5 Alarm
6 Big containers
7 Spread around

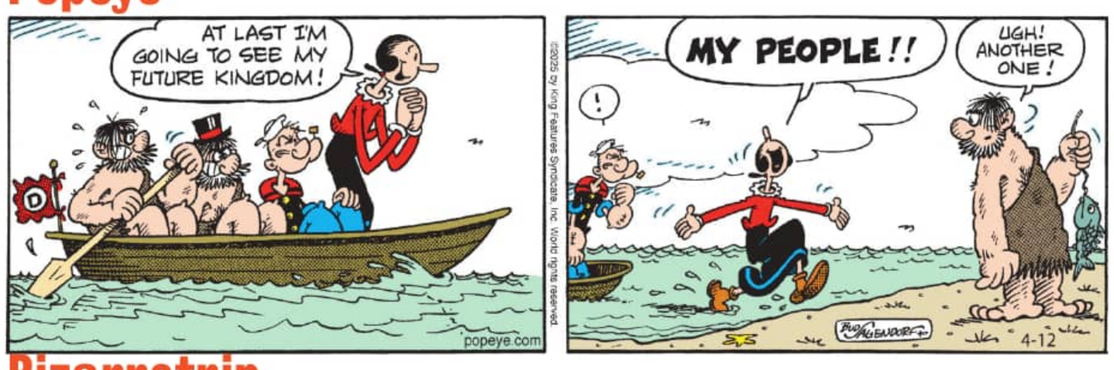


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

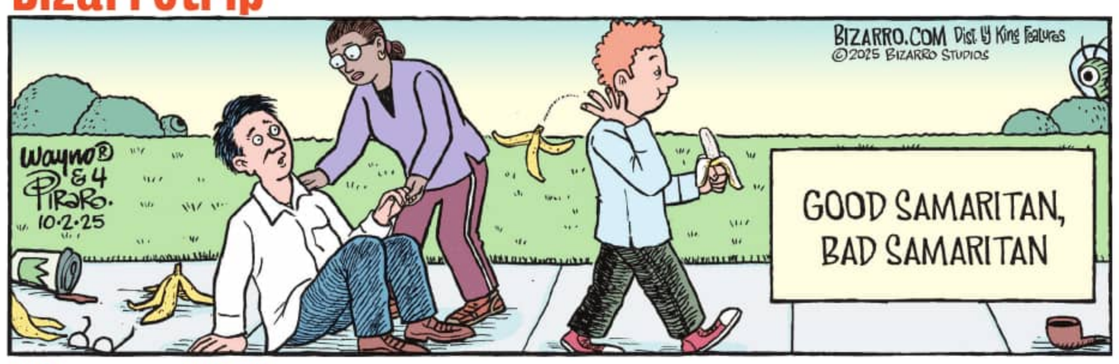
DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye

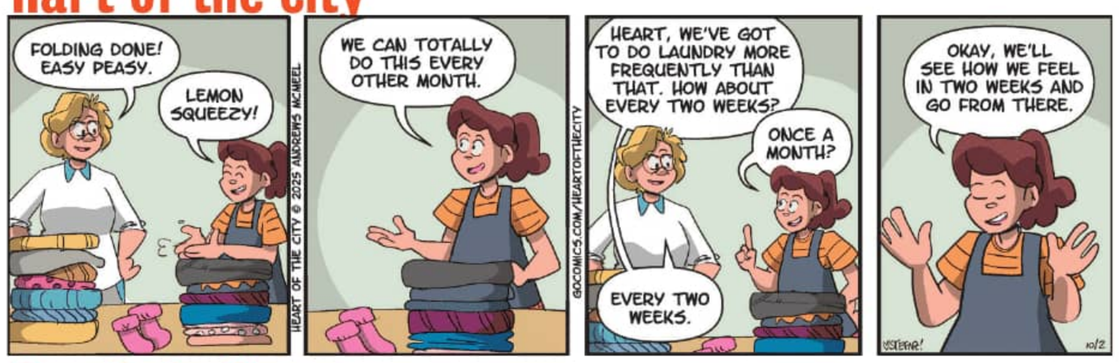


Bizarrotrip

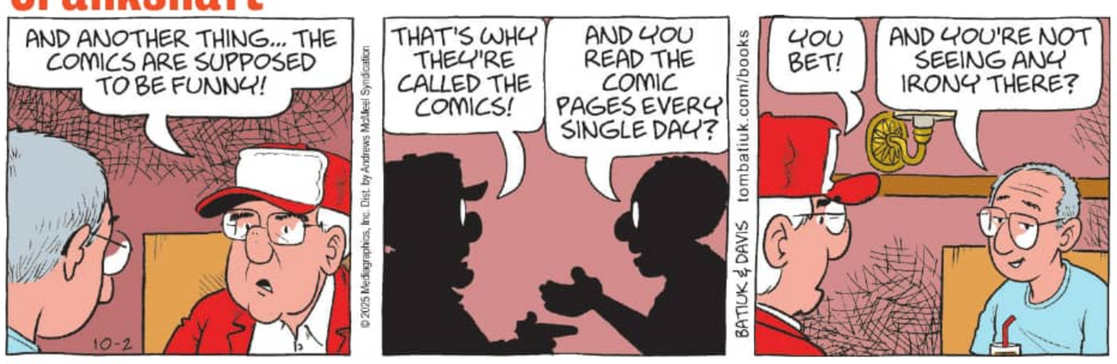


Diamond Lil

Hart of the city



Crankshaft



Mutts

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Expect a year of deep intuition, compassionate service, and creative flow. Spend time nurturing your artistic talents or pursuing spiritual practices for renewal. Boundaries are important; learn to protect your sensitive nature from external stress. This cycle quietly guides you to a path where your gentle nature brings powerful healing to others.

Aries Mar 21–Apr 20

Fresh motivation inspires meaningful life adjustments today. You may envision improved routines, brighter goals, or uplifting environments. Support loved ones gently and stay attentive to family well-being.

Taurus Apr 21–May 20

Calm patience guides your actions today, helping teamwork flow smoothly. Thoughtful collaboration strengthens work results. Short family outings refresh your spirit and deepen bonds, bringing peaceful moments.

Gemini May 21–Jun 21

Family interactions bring cheerful warmth today. A practical purchase may inspire productivity and joy. Encouraging financial updates arrive later, confirming your steady progress and lifting your confidence beautifully.

Cancer Jun 22–July 23

Strengthening friendships offers comfort today. Creative ideas brighten your thoughts while restful meals support wellness. Future goals feel clearer, and expressing appreciation to your partner deepens emotional harmony.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Focused leadership helps your project shine today. Determination highlights your talents and strengthens your reputation. Careful spending choices keep everything balanced, allowing you to enjoy progress.

Virgo Aug 24–Sep 23

Financial blessings bring stability today. Property decisions appear favourable and promising. A gentle desire for spiritual exploration inspires peaceful travel ideas that uplift your heart and refresh your perspective in meaningful ways.

Libra Sep 24–Oct 22

Restful moments support your well-being today. Business growth feels encouraging as progress unfolds smoothly. Students benefit from strong focus. Quiet time indoors helps you restore energy.

Scorpio Oct 23–Nov 22

New responsibilities highlight your strengths today, bringing trust from superiors. Relationship harmony improves with thoughtful communication. Planning financial steps carefully supports long-term goals.

Sagittarius Nov 23–Dec 22

Romantic blessings brighten your day, especially for singles. Career opportunities grow stronger. Jewellery related investments feel promising. Your optimism attracts supportive people and uplifting experiences aligned with your aspirations.

Capricorn Dec 23–Jan 20

Professional appreciation uplifts your spirit today. Recognition strengthens confidence and opens meaningful social connections. Couples enjoy warm bonding moments that restore closeness. The day brings gentle joy and inspiring alignment in many areas.

Aquarius Jan 21–Feb 19

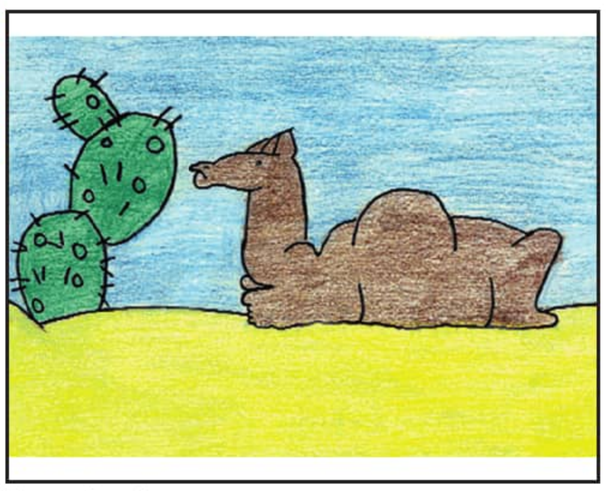
A slow beginning transforms into a creatively inspired evening. Business planning becomes exciting and clear. A refreshing walk resets your energy and helps you prepare confidently for your next purposeful steps forward.

Pisces Feb 20–Mar 20

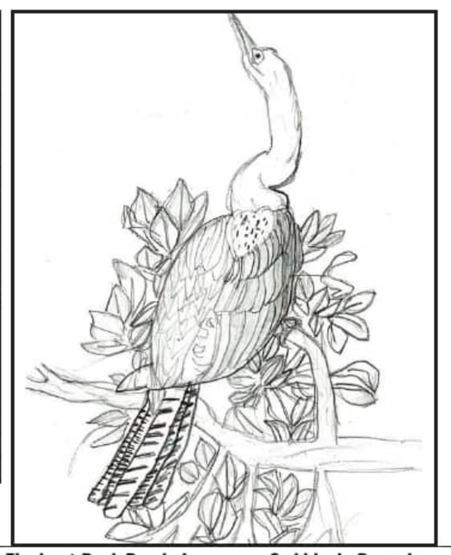
Work opportunities appear at the perfect moment today. Students gain fresh inspiration from new interests. Considering a job change brings promising potential. Embrace curiosity.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Vismaya, Bengaluru



Ananya, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

$\sqrt{(2^8a^8B)}/\sqrt[6]{2^6a24} =$
$(2^4a^4/2^a4)=$
$16^a4/2^a4=$
8

BULL'S EYE

cactus, cast, CAUSTIC, scat

STRIKE OUT

A	D	I	D	I	T	■	S	O	R	R	E	L	S	
T	■	I	C	E	B	E	R	G	■	■	■	C		
E	N	T	A	I	L	■	D	E	O	D	A	R		
D	R	■	T	E	A	■	U	■	■	■	■	E		
B	A	K	U	■	P	■	E	R	E	C	T	■		
L	C	■	R	I	A	L	S	■	K	■	E			
O	C	E	A	N	■	C	■	S	A	I	D	■		
T	■	B	■	■	E	R	E	■	N	■	T			
H	E	R	B	A	L	■	O	N	A	G	E	R		
I	■	O	R	I	N	O	C	O	■	■	■	I		
A	■	T	A	D	■	T	E	N	■	■	■	E		
N	O	N	S	T	O	P	■	S	E	A	L	S		

FAST FIVE

S	T	A	L	K
H	A	L	O	N
A	T	O	N	E
W	O	N	G	A
L	U	G	E	D

QUOTE UNCODE

The spiritual always did exist, always will. It is eternal, it is changeless.

QUICK

■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
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■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE

5. The product of the numbers in opposite segments always equals 60.

RIDDLER

You are out of order (the letters "U" and "R" have traded places; U R out of order).

SUDOKU

6	7	2	1	3	9	8	5	4
1	4	8	6	2	5	3	7	9
3	5	9	7	8	4	1	6	2
9	8	6	2	7	3	5	4	1
5	2	3	8	4	1	6	9	7
7	1	4	5	9	6	2	8	3
8	9	5	3	1	7	4	2	6
2	3	7	4	6	8	9	1	5
4	6	1	9	5	2	7	3	8

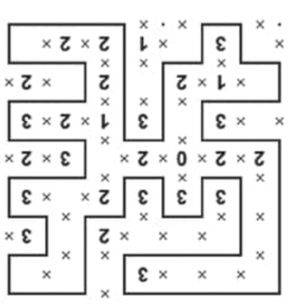
ALPHA TRIANGLE

C, Ac, Car, Race, Scare, Crates, Scatter.

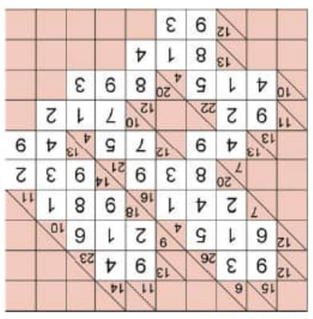
GO FIGURE

Easy
4 + 3 - 9 + 9 = 7
Medium
2 x 7 - 7 - 1 = 6
Hard
3 - 2 x 9 x 6 = 54

LOOP



KAKURO



Volume No 19, Issue No 008 RNI NO:KARENG/2007/21142 Published for the Proprietors, Metropolitan Media Company Ltd by Lokesh K.V. at No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011 and printed by him at Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd., The Times of India Press, No. 9/10/11-A, 4th Main, KIADB Bommasandra Industrial Area, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore-560 099 (Phones : Press : 080-22899999; Editorial : 080-40877666, Registered Office: No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011, Email : mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com Editor : Ms. Seena Menon-responsible for selection of news under PRB Act. © Reproduction in whole or in part without the written permission of the Publisher is prohibited.

 # Weighty role
Hollywood star Kate Hudson said she had to gain 15 pounds for her role of Claire Sardina in the 2025 musical "Song Sung Blue"

Support system

Rhea talks about her friends who were with her during darkest of times

Sushant Singh Rajput's sudden demise in 2020 left everyone shocked and in grief and it also was a difficult year for Rhea Chakraborty. The actress was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau over alleged drug links, while his family accused her of abetment, theft and financial misappropriation. In 2025, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) submitted its closure report, giving Rhea and her brother Showik Chakraborty a clean chit in the case. The actress began her chapter two with a podcast with the same name, depicting her life journey. Now as Rhea released a promotional video from the season finale of her podcast, she revealed that during this tough time, some of her female friends stood by her, especially Shibani Dandekar. This finale episode features Rhea in an intimate conversation with these women who were by her side during her dark phase.

The clip opens on an emotional note, with Shibani's sister, Anusha Dandekar, breaking down in tears. Rhea is seen consoling her, saying softly, "If she will cry then I will cry."

Then one sees Rhea opening up about the emotional toll of that phase. Reflecting on the year that changed her life, she says, "The year 2020 was a difficult time of my life. As my dad says, if it weren't for these women, we would have never survived. Now we don't need a temple in the house, we need a picture of these women." Fashion stylist Anisha Jain, another close friend, also spoke about the resilience it took to get through that period. "2020 was a lot and we did what we had to. I don't know where that courage came from," she admitted.

Rhea's friend Samiksha Shetty recalled an unexpected conversation with the actor. "She just came to me one day and said 'we have to do this one thing' and I thought she wants to get her nails done, but she said, 'Let's go freeze our eggs'," Samiksha shared.

-ETimes

Alia is a Yami fan

Bollywood star Alia Bhatt praised Yami Gautam for her performance in courtroom drama "Haq" and said she has become a fan of the actor, who has delivered "one of the top female performances".

Bhatt penned a note on her Instagram handle on Sunday as she posted Gautam's picture from the film. "Queen @yamigautam, you are pure craft, heart and all things gold in 'Haq'!@ One of my top female performances of all time," she wrote.

The "Jigra" actor said she is eagerly waiting for Gautam's upcoming projects. "As I mentioned over the phone too... am a Yami fan waiting eagerly for all your work to once again charm and entertain us all," she added.

Directed by Suparn Verma, the film also featured Emraan Hashmi. It dramatises the events surrounding the landmark Mohd Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum case, as depicted in Jigna Vora's book "Bano: Bharat Ki Beti". **-PTI**

With full hearts

Kriti Sanon couldn't hide her happiness as her younger sister Nupur Sanon tied the knot with singer Stebin Ben in a picturesque Christian ceremony in Udaipur. The actress was seen looking elated as one of the bridesmaids, celebrating the special day with the newlyweds amid much love.

Stebin Ben and Nupur took to social media to share stunning pictures from their wedding. In the first photo, the couple is seen sealing their union with a sweet kiss after the ceremony. Nupur looked radiant in a classic white gown, while Stebin complemented her perfectly for the special occasion.

Another picture that caught attention featured Kriti Sanon in a light green gown, posing with the other bridesmaids. The Mimi actor flashed a wide smile and made a playful 'peace' sign, clearly enjoying every moment of her sister's big day. Sharing the photos, Stebin wrote in the caption, "I did. I DO. I will. Always & Forever..."

Kriti Sanon reshared the wedding post on her Instagram Stories and expressed her emotions in a heartfelt note. She wrote, "My heart is full! Love, happiness, blessings. #StebiNupur." Her reaction perfectly reflected how special the moment was for the entire Sanon family. **-ETimes**

Jodie Foster roasts AI

Hollywood actress Jodie Foster is taking a dim view of artificial intelligence (AI) for forgetting her role in the original 'Freaky Friday' movie. The 63-year-old actress claims that if "what are the 'Freaky Friday' movies" is typed into ChatGPT, the chatbot does not mention her role of Annabel - who has a row with her mom Ellen (played by Barbara Harris) before they swap bodies and navigate life in each other's shoes, reports 'Female First UK'.

The actress said that it states the original movie is the 2003 remake starring Lindsay Lohan, 39, and 67 year old Jamie Lee Curtis, and its 2025 sequel, 'Freakier Friday', only. Foster told 'Variety', "You know who forgets that I was the original Annabel in Freaky Friday is AI. So if you go on like ChatGPT or any of those things and say, 'Hey! What are the Freaky Friday movies?'. They say there was an original, which is the original with Jamie Lee Curtis, and then there's the second one (Freakier Friday) that just came out. And they don't mention me. AI has no recollection of the '70s".

Almost 30 years after the 1976 'Freaky Friday', which grossed more than $25 million on a $5 million budget, was remade by 61-year-old director Mark Waters.

As per 'Female First UK', he cast Lindsay Lohan in the role of Anna Coleman, inspired by Foster's role, and Curtis as her mom Tess Coleman, inspired by Harris' character.

In 2025, 'Freaky Friday' received a sequel from 51-year-old filmmaker Nisha Ganatra, which Foster has not seen yet.

Foster said, "I haven't seen the brand-new one, but I did see the other one and, of course, I love Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan. And it is funny how different it was because it was a different time period and all of that, and Jamie and I laugh about that..." **-IANS**

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Show-reel not a gimmick

Nam Rushi who is known for the lyrics - Olithu Maadu Manusa - unveiled the show-reel of his forthcoming movie Ram Rahim, a love triangle. The film's tagline is Bhai Bhai. The way the show-reel is made, it looks like it is a publicity gimmick because no director asks audiences not to watch his movie. Nam Rushi does exactly that in the show-reel. Nam Rushi says that it is not easy to produce and direct a Kannada movie and it is too tough to release it. The main cast of the movie, including heroine Rajeshwari, also reveal in the 11.22-minute show-reel how director Nam Rushi used to attend the shooting late and how he used to drink alcohol before reaching the shoot location.

"In the show-reel, I advise the audiences not to watch the movie. I have a reason for doing that. It is not a gimmick. I will reveal the reason on the day this movie is released. I do not want to approach a film distributor to screen this movie. I spent Rs 60 lakh to distribute the film myself," he said.

Karikada on Feb 6

The team of Karikada has been busy with organising promotional events for the movie. The team is excited about the release of its song - Rathuni Rathuni- at Mall of Asia on Saturday. The teaser released three months ago was much appreciated.

The horror thriller is directed by Gilli Venkatesh while Kaada Natraj has written the script and played the lead. Natraj's wife Deepti Damodara supported the movie in association with Ravikumar SR. Bollywood actress Kriti Varma dances with Rathuni Rathuni, Kaada Natraj and around 100 junior artistes in a song. Shashank Seshagiri has composed foot-tapping music.

"It is my second movie as an actor after Varnamaya. Karikada, which is scheduled for release on February 6, revolves around a village where people consider hunting of wild animals as a matter of prestige. Around 70 percent of the filming of this movie took place in forest areas. The movie is a musical journey with adventure elements. We are contemplating releasing it in four other languages than Kannada.